

CHAPTER 6

STRIKES

Strikes are an inefficient method of ending a fight. However, they are a significant part of most fights, and a soldier must have an understanding of fighting at striking range. It is important to note that while at striking range, you are open to being struck. For this reason, it is often better to avoid striking range.

Section I. NATURAL WEAPONS

The key to developing effective striking skills is understanding range and knowing what techniques are effective at what range and controlling the transition between ranges. Techniques are taught individually, but they must be approached as a part of an overall fighting strategy. Effective striking is not something that can be taught overnight. This section describes natural weapon techniques of various punches, strikes, and kicks and addresses the ranges from which they are effective.

6-1. ARM STRIKES

The strikes in this section are presented individually. It is important to know that they will almost never be used this way. Follow-on sections will address combinations and how strikes fit into an overall fight strategy. Remember that when learning each of the following strikes to keep your guard up with the non-punching arm.

a. **Jab** (Figure 6-1). The jab is thrown with the lead hand and is used for controlling the range, and setting up further techniques. From the basic stance, snap your lead arm out with a slight pivot of your hip and shoulder. You should rotate your shoulder so that the punch lands with your palm down and quickly snap your arm back into the ready position. Your punch should travel in a straight line, and your elbow should never stick out away from your body at any time during the punch.



Figure 6-1. Jab.

Note: To step into your jab, drive off of your trail leg as you punch and slide your trail leg forward as you withdraw your punching arm.

b. **Reverse Punch** (Figure 6-2). The reverse punch is a power punch thrown from the rear arm. It can be a fight ender by itself, but it is also very useful to set up takedowns. From the basic stance, turn on the ball of your trail foot as if you were putting out a cigarette so that your hips and shoulders are facing toward the enemy. As you extend your punch, rotate your arm so that you strike with your knuckles up and palm facing down. You should extend your punch as if to go through your opponent and then snap back into the ready position.



Figure 6-2. Reverse punch.

Note: Ensure that you do not lock your elbow when your punch is fully extended.

c. **Hook** (Figure 6-3). The hook is a power punch that is usually thrown from the front arm. It is very powerful and works well in combinations. One of its main advantages is that it can be fully executed outside of the enemy's field of vision. The common mistake is to think of it as a looping arm punch. In reality a powerful hook does not involve very much arm movement, generating its power from your leg hip and shoulder movement. From the basic stance, turn on your lead foot as if you were putting out a cigarette, turning your hips and shoulders toward the inside. Raise your elbow as you turn so that your punch lands with your arm parallel with the ground, and your palm facing toward your chest. Your trail foot should remain planted. You should then smoothly tuck your elbow back in to your side and turn your shoulders to return to the ready position.



Figure 6-3. Hook.

d. **Uppercut.** The uppercut can be thrown with either hand and is particularly effective against an opponent who is crouching or trying to avoid a clinch.

(1) ***Lead Hand Uppercut.***

(a) *Step 1* (Figure 6-4). From the basic stance, turn your hips and shoulders slightly to face the enemy, and dip your lead shoulder downward. You should be changing your level slightly by bending your knees.



Figure 6-4. Lead hand uppercut, step 1.

(b) *Step 2* (Figure 6-5). Keep your elbow tucked in and drive off of your lead leg to land your punch, palm facing up with your wrist firm and straight.



Figure 6-5. Lead hand uppercut, step 2.

(c) *Step 3*. Turn your shoulders and snap back into the ready position.

(2) ***Trail Hand Uppercut.***

(a) *Step 1* (Figure 6-6). From the basic stance, turn your hips and shoulders slightly to face the enemy, and dip your rear shoulder downward. You should be changing your level slightly by bending your knees.



Figure 6-6. Trail hand uppercut, step 1.

(b) *Step 2* (Figure 6-7). Drive off of your trail leg through your hip to land your punch, palm facing up with your wrist straight and firm. Your arm will be slightly more extended than the lead hand punch.



Figure 6-7. Trail hand uppercut, step 2.

(c) *Step 3*. Snap back into the ready position.

e. **Elbow Strikes.** Elbow strikes can be devastating blows and are very useful at close range. You should remember that they gain their power from the hips and legs.

(1) **Horizontal Elbow Strike** (Figure 6-8). A horizontal elbow strike is thrown almost exactly like a hook, with the exceptions that at the moment of impact the palm should be facing the ground.



Figure 6-8. Horizontal elbow strike.

(2) ***Upward Elbow Strike*** (Figure 6-9). The upward elbow strike is thrown almost exactly like an uppercut, with the exception that at the moment of impact the palm should be facing inward toward your head.



Figure 6-9. Upward elbow strike.

6-2. PUNCHING COMBINATIONS

Strikes must be thrown in combinations to be effective—“bunches of punches” as the old boxing saying goes. Combination punching must be practiced in order to come naturally while under the stress of combat. After the basic punches are learned individually, they should be practiced in combination. Particular attention should be paid to snapping each hand back into a defensive posture after it is used. Remember that when you are in punching range, so is the enemy. You must make a good defense an integral part of your offense. Some combination punches are:

- Jab—reverse punch.
- Jab—reverse punch—hook.
- Jab—hook.
- Jab—hook—reverse punch.
- Lead hand uppercut to the body—trail hand uppercut to the body—hook to the head.
- Lead hand uppercut to the body—trail hand uppercut to the body—lead hand horizontal elbow strike—trail hand upward elbow strike.

6-3. KICKS

Kicks during hand-to-hand combat are best directed at low targets and should be simple but effective. Combat soldiers are usually burdened with combat boots and LCE. His flexibility level is usually low during combat, and if engaged in hand-to-hand combat, he will be under high stress. He must rely on gross motor skills and kicks that do not require complicated movement or much training and practice to execute.

a. **Lead Leg Front Kick** (Figure 6-10). The lead leg front kick is not a very powerful kick, but it can be a very good tool to help control the range. The target should be the enemy's thigh, just above the knee. The striking surface is the sole of the foot. It is very important that if the kick does not land, your foot should not slide off toward the enemy's back. This would present your back to him.



Figure 6-10. Lead leg front kick.

b. **Rear Leg Front Kick** (Figure 6-11). The rear leg front kick is a much more powerful kick. The best target is the abdomen. The striking surface should be either the ball of the foot or the entire sole of the foot.



Figure 6-11. Rear leg front kick.

c. **Shin Kick.** The shin kick is a powerful kick, and it is easily performed with little training. When the legs are targeted, the kick is hard to defend against (Figure 6-12), and an opponent can be dropped by it.



Figure 6-12. Shin kick to the outer thigh.

d. **Stepping Side Kick** (Figure 6-13). A soldier starts a stepping side kick (Step 1) by stepping either behind or in front of his other foot to close the distance between him and his opponent. The movement is like that in a skip. The soldier now brings the knee of his kicking foot up and thrusts out a sidekick (Step 2). Tremendous power and momentum can be developed in this kick.

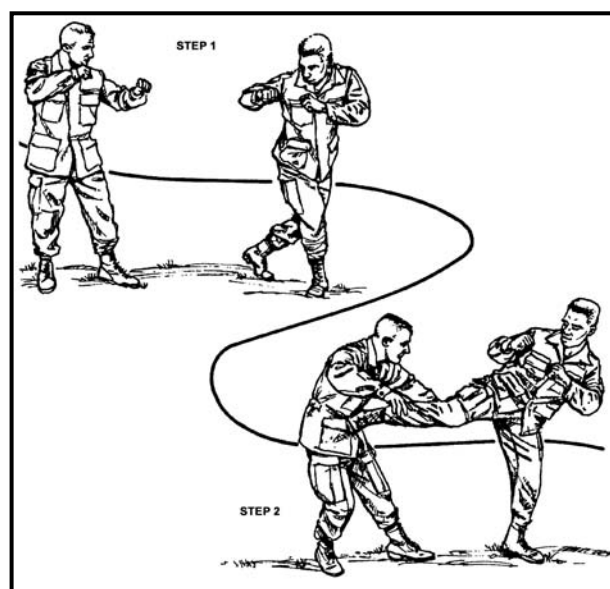


Figure 6-13. Stepping side kick.

e. **Knee Strike** (Figure 6-14). A knee strike can be a devastating weapon. It is best used when in the clinch, at very close range, or when the enemy is against a wall. The best target is the head, but the thigh or body may also be targeted under certain conditions.



Figure 6-14. Knee strike.

6-4. TRANSITION BETWEEN RANGES

In order to dominate the standup fight, you must be able to control the range between you and the enemy, and to operate effectively at the various ranges, keeping the enemy reacting to your techniques, and setting the pace of the fight. The ability to keep your head and continue to execute effective techniques requires practice. This is the heart of standup fighting. To transition between ranges, use a combination of techniques such as:

- Jab—reverse punch—shin kick to the outer thigh.
- Jab—reverse punch—shin kick to the outer thigh—high single leg takedown.